

Dr. Blade Nzimande's Attack On Universities

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
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Dr. Blade Nzimande, Minister for Higher Education and Training, is abusing the politically charged word transformation to promote the continued Anglicisation of universities and to launch an attack on the autonomy of universities.

If transformation means the improvement of universities, it has to be accepted that he would concentrate on those universities which at present are under-performing on an academic and managerial level. Yet it appears that in his attack he is concentrating on the historically Afrikaans universities and threatens them with the allocation of the state's financial aid.

That racism exists in South Africa and at universities is not doubted at all. Where universities in South Africa are transformed in such a way that 90% of students are already black, the experience in practice is that black against white racism is a growing problem. Yet the minister is ignoring this and he only refers to racism as mainly a white on black phenomenon. It polarises and does not bring us closer to any solution.

His reference to the universities of Stellenbosch and Afrikaans, which excludes students, is nothing other than a hidden attempt to anglicise the last few universities where Afrikaans still exists as an academic language. The government should be giving these universities extra state funding in order to promote multi-lingualism and to acknowledge that universities which only use English as medium of instruction, exclude many students through this practice.

"With the Western Cape's population being more than 60% Afrikaans speaking and brown, there should be no debate about Afrikaans as medium of instruction at the University of Stellenbosch. With two of the universities in the Western Cape already English, people who pressurise the University of Stellenbosch have a transparent Anglicisation agenda", according to Dr. Mulder.

In as far as minister Blade Nzimande will be striving to ensure that all promising students with financial difficulties will be able to gain easier access to universities, the FF Plus will be supporting him in this.

Dr. Pieter Mulder

Contact no.: 082 472 0189 / 082 777 0202